

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 03434 141218Z
ACTION NODS-00

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INFO WHITE HOUSE NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 3434

NODIS

WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR IS LE US
SUBJ: MEETING WITH DEFMIN WEIZMAN: RETALIATORY STRIKE AGAINST
FATAH FORCES

REF.: STATE 64270

1. I MET WITH MINISTER WEIZMAN AT 1100 HOURS THIS MORNING.
ALSO PRESENT WERE WEIZMAN'S AIDE, COL TEHILA, AND COL
WILLIAMS.

2. IN CONVEYING TO HIM THE POINTS CONTAINED IN REFTTEL, I
REMIND HIM OF DETAILS OF HIS WEEKEND CONVERSATION WITH
AMBASSADOR LEWIS AND REITERATED U S CONCERN OVER
IMPLICATIONS OF POSSIBLE RETALIATORY STRIKES. ALSO READ
TO HIM THE COMMENTS MADE YESTERDAY ON THIS SUBJECT BY
THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN. TERMINATED MY INITIAL REMARKS
BY STATING THAT ALTHOUGH WE THOROUGHLY UNDERSTAND THAT
THE LEGITIMATE SECURITY INTERESTS OF ISRAEL MUST BE
PROTECTED, WE DO NOT, AND WE ARE CERTAIN THE ISRAELIS
DO NOT, WISH AGAIN TO SEE PHOTOGRAPHS OF INNOCENT
WOMEN AND CHILDREN SPLASHED ACROSS THE INTERNATIONAL
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PRESS AS HAD HAPPENED FOLLOWING LAST AUTUMN'S RETALIATORY
AIR STRIKES.

3. WEIZMAN RESPONDED IN A STEADY BUT FIRM FASHION.
HE SAID THAT "SOME WHERE ALONG THE LINE THERE IS A LIMIT--
SOMETIMES THE VERY THIN FUSE SNAPS." HE RECALLED THE MANY
CONVERSATIONS THAT HE HAD HELD WITH AMBASSADOR LEWIS

AND ME CONCERNING SOUTHERN LEBANON AND OF THE PALESTINIAN USE OF LEBANON AS A BASE FROM WHICH THEY TRY "TO BLOW EVERYTHING UP." CALMLY AND DELIBERATELY HE ASKED, "HOW LONG CAN I FACE, AS SADAT SAYS, 'MY PEOPLE' AND TELL THEM THAT WE MUST RESTRAIN OURSELVES?"

4. WEIZMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE ISRAELIS KNOW EXACTLY WHERE THE FATAH FORCES ARE LOCATED IN LEBANON AND COULD EASILY HAVE HIT THEM BEFORE THE TRAGEDY OF THIS PAST WEEKEND. HE SAID THAT HE IS NOW BEING PERSONALLY CRITICIZED FOR NOT HAVING DONE SOMETHING IN ORDER TO REDUCE IF NOT ELIMINATE THE THREAT. HE UNDERScoreD THAT ISRAEL HAD LISTENED TO U S ADVICE AND COUNSEL OF RESTRAINT OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. BUT HE SAID THAT NOW "IT IS VERY, VERY DIFFICULT TO AGREE TO WHAT YOU ARE NOW SAYING." AT THIS POINT HE REEMPHASIZED THAT HE IS BEING SEVERELY CRITICIZED "BY MY CLOSEST FRIENDS" FOR HAVING BEEN TOO LENIENT IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS.

5. HE ENDED THIS PORTION OF OUR DISCUSSION BY SAYING THAT HE "RECEIVED WHAT I HAD SAID AND WHAT AMBASSADOR LEWIS HAD SAID LOUD AND CLEAR." NOTING THAT HE, TOO, WOULD HATE TO SEE PHOTOGRAPHS OF INNOCENT PEOPLE SPLASHED OVER THE PAPERS HE SAID, "I PROMISE YOU I WILL DO MY VERY BEST TO ENSURE THAT THE PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ONLY OF FATAH." WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT ARAFAT
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IS "CLAIMING THE ROYALTIES FOR THE EVENTS OF THIS PAST WEEKEND" AND THAT ISRAEL CANNOT SWALLOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED. "THERE ARE NOT VERY MANY SOLUTIONS--I CANNOT GO VIA SIBERIA."

6. WEIZMAN, TOGETHER WITH THE CHIEF OF STAFF, THE CHIEF OF G BRANCH, THE DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS MEET AT 1330 HOURS TODAY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER IN JERUSALEM. WE BELIEVE THIS WILL BE THE DECISIVE SESSION ON WHEN AND HOW THE IDF WILL RESPOND TO THE TERRORIST ATTACK. THE CURRENT WEATHER SITUATION IS CHARACTERIZED BY HIGH WINDS AND LIMITED VISABILITY. IT IS EXPECTED TO BREAK BY TOMORROW MORNING. ALTHOUGH WEIZMAN AT NO TIME GAVE US ANY INDICATION OF WHEN A STRIKE WOULD TAKE PLACE, OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT IT WILL BE WITHIN THE NEXT 24 HOURS. WE ARE STICKING WITH OUR ESTIMATE THAT IT WILL BE A BROAD-SCALED GROUND AND AIR ATTACK ALONG THE SOUTH LEBANESE BORDER WITH THE PURPOSE OF PURGING THE REGION OF PALESTINIAN FORCES.

7. OTHER ELEMENTS OF CONVERSATION ARE BEING REPORTED VIA SEPTELS. VIETS

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NNN

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